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THOMPSON

OLD THINGS AND NEW

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“OLD THINGS AND NEW.”

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A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE CHAPEL OF TRINITY COLLEGE,

ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1852,

Being Commemoration Day.

BY W. H. THOMPSON, M.A.,

FELLOW AND TUTOR.

*Prof. of Greek.*

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TO

THE MASTER, FELLOWS, AND SCHOLARS

OF TRINITY COLLEGE,

THIS DISCOURSE

IS, WITH RESPECT AND AFFECTION,

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Page 16. In note, *for* Muir read Mure





# A S E R M O N,

&c.

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ST MATTHEW XIII. 52.

*Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*

OF the memorable sayings of our Lord, recorded by his biographers, not a few seem fairly to admit of a twofold use; as they are viewed in direct relation to the circumstances which the context supplies; or as treated with reference to the more general applications of which in themselves, and apart from the connexion, they are susceptible. The verse before us seems one in which are to be traced both this more restricted and this wider meaning. Occurring after a series of parables, all of which are designed, under varying images, to shadow forth the nature and principles of that kingdom of heaven which it was the aim of Christ's teaching to proclaim and describe, and of his life and death actually to establish among men,—occurring in such a context, it may be not unnaturally regarded as a recommendation of his own practice of conveying old truths under new and striking forms, and new truths under the guise of the most familiar incidents of human life. The old and the new thus mutually set off and illustrate each other: and it is surely true that the teacher who is able so to combine both, as to detain the attention and enlighten the gradually prepared

faculties of his hearers, is one "schooled" in no inconsiderable degree "unto the kingdom of heaven."

It does not, however, appear that the followers of our Lord ventured in this respect to tread in their Master's footsteps: at least we are in possession of no recorded specimen of this teaching in parables, as practised by any of his disciples. But if this most characteristic feature in Christ's method of presenting divine truths to his hearers, is not discernible in the oral or written discourses of the Apostolic age, it would be wrong to suppose that the true spirit of the recommendation in our text was misunderstood or neglected by the great teachers who represent that era in the history of the Church.

The remarkable declaration of their Master, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," had struck deep root in their convictions, and bore its fruit in their practice, as ministers and expounders of the new dispensation. Of the Apostles of the circumcision the truth of this remark is evident at first glance. How tenderly do we find them dealing with the prejudices of their Hebrew countrymen; how loth to relinquish the forms and ritual precepts of the law; how gladly appealing to the inspiration of the prophets; how solicitous, on all occasions, that no irreverence, real or apparent, for the old, should mingle with their proclamation of the new. And even under the mass of sensual corruption, and effete yet poisonous superstitions, with which the face of Roman heathendom was encrusted, the earnest eye of the Apostle of the Gentiles could discern the stirrings of a not yet exhausted life, and the embers of truth not yet extin-

guished. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you," and, "as certain also of your own poets have said; For we are his offspring—" the arguments Paul used on Mars' hill, in contending with the subtle dialecticians of Athens, find their echo in that brief but pregnant summary of the religious history of mankind, which forms the preface to his Epistle to the mixed Jewish and Gentile Church of Rome. In which, though cheerfully acknowledging the advantage enjoyed by the Hebrew in the possession of a definite moral code, preserved in written documents, he yet loudly proclaims the authority of the law of conscience, unwritten save on the fleshly tables of the heart, which was not less binding on the heathen, confirmed as it was by the mute revelation of God's eternal power and divinity which He had given them in the things that were made.

It was, indeed, this truly catholic recognition of these deepest and most universal principles of our common human nature, which enabled St Paul to perceive that the divine message with which he was entrusted was not a message to the descendants of Abraham only, but to all who were made in the likeness of God, and partakers of that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world: but for which recognition, struggled against both long and fiercely by his brethren of narrower views, Christianity would have been, what to the heathen it appeared, but one—albeit the purest and most profound—of the numerous sects of Judaism.

It was thus by his strong apprehension of the most ancient facts of humanity, that St Paul was enabled to introduce the greatest of all innovations in existing

human creeds: to establish a religion positive yet no longer national; historical and yet spiritual; intelligible to the vulgar, yet claiming the assent and obedience of the philosopher. A religion, abrogating sacrifices for ever, while it recognised the ideas, true in the main, on which sacrifice had been founded; proclaiming the fact of an incarnation, while it swept away worships to which the idea of incarnated Divinity had given their life and meaning; raising the standard and strengthening the sanctions of the moral law, while it declared that by obedience to that law, should no flesh be justified before God. A religion which elevated while it abased; which asserted, in one breath, the responsibility and the helplessness of man, the indefeasible freedom of his will, and the necessity of absolute submission to the will of God. Paradoxes these, more startling than those of the Stoics, yet capable of being reconciled and verified in the experience of the most illiterate believer.

And if Christianity, as first promulgated, presents this spectacle of blended old and new elements, recognising on the one hand all the aspirations of humanity, and yet satisfying them by methods which unaided humanity could not have ventured to anticipate; not less clearly may we mark the working of those elements in subsequent phases of its history. There are those, indeed, who would have us behold in that history nothing but a continuous process of self-development, assuring us that the Romanism of the nineteenth century contains nothing but what existed implicitly in the Christianity of the Apostles, even as the oak is but the expansion and fulfilment of the type imprisoned in the acorn. It is impossible not to admire the diligence with

which the accomplished English expounder of this doctrine has ransacked nature and history for analogies to recommend it, and difficult, perhaps, altogether to resist the allurements of a theory which undertakes to solve so many difficulties and to explain so many phenomena. But were it even true that the vast pretensions of the *Essay on Development* had been made good, were there no instances, as there are many, of\* unwarrantable in-

\* These may seem grave charges, but compare *Essay*, p. 50, where an important passage of Butler is made to justify "the doctrine of the beatification of the saints being developed into their *Cultus*; of the θεότοκος, or Mother of God, into *hyperdulia*; and of the Real Presence into Adoration of the Host." Butler's argument is, that the relations in which the second and third persons of the Trinity stand to us being clearly laid down in Scripture, the worship of the Son and Holy Ghost is implicitly commanded; "for, the relations being known, the obligations to such internal worship are obligations of reason, arising out of those relations themselves." It is therefore tacitly assumed by Mr Newman that the relations to us of the saints and of "St Mary" are known from Scripture, as those of the Son and Holy Ghost are known. In p. 145, a quotation from Paley's *Evidences* is "expanded" into an apology (indirectly insinuated, but not the less real) for purgatory, the pope, monachism, persecution, and many things besides. This astounding passage in the *Essay* is well worth study. I will quote another: "Revelation consists in the manifestation of the invisible Divine power, or in the *substitution* of the voice of a Lawgiver for the voice of conscience." *Ib.* p. 124. No statement can be more undeniable than the former; few more objectionable than the latter; yet it is tacitly assumed that they are identical, and a most mischievous use is made of the assumption in the sequel. In the very next sentence, religion is used twice, and, it seems to me, in a different sense each time. "The supremacy of conscience is the essence of natural religion; the supremacy of apostle, or pope, or church, or bishop, is the essence of revealed." If religion be taken subjectively (to use Mr Newman's own phraseology), the supremacy of conscience is as much the essence of revealed as of natural religion; if objectively, the supremacy of conscience is its essence in neither case;—the conscience needing both a rule and a sanction external to itself in either instance. These passages are taken almost at random from Mr Newman's book. The misuse of the argument from analogy, and of Bishop Butler's principles, which is remark-

ferences slipt in by way of corollary to undeniable truths, of new meanings put on words by stealth, of propositions insinuated, which to state clearly were to refute; were the connexion between premisses and conclusion interrupted by no such breaches of continuity, we should still be entitled to ask, What is the hypothesis that gives cogency to the argument, and is it, not sufficient only, but true? If this test, by whose agency so many brilliant fabrics of human speculation have been dissolved, be applied to the Essay of which we are speaking, we shall perceive that the cohesion of its parts depends on a first falsehood\*, the assumption of an infallible developing authority. The enquirer to whom the existence of this virtual *petitio principii* has once been made clear, will find that the spell which seemed to bind his understanding is at length broken, and that he is once more at liberty to contemplate the history of

able in the *Essay*, reminds one forcibly of Socrates' warning: ἐγὼ δὲ τοῖς διὰ τῶν εἰκότων τὴν ἀπόδειξιν ποιουμένοις λόγοις σύννοια οὖσιν ἀλάζωσι. Two qualities seem especially required in a reasoner from analogy, solidity of judgment, and incorruptible integrity, both of which are found in an eminent degree in Butler. When these are wanting, and their place is supplied by ingenuity, and the spirit of special pleading, we must expect to be led to surprising conclusions.

\* Mr Newman has no right to call the Fact or Theory of Development a "hypothesis to account for a difficulty," *Essay*, p. 27. It is merely a collective term for the phenomena to be explained. Nobody, at any rate no Protestant, doubts the *fact* that Scripture statements and doctrines have been "expanded" and "developed" in subsequent ages: nor does the philosophical thinker deny that such developments are of necessary occurrence, both in religious, philosophical, and political ideas. The "hypothesis" is, the infallibility of the developing authority, which accounts, not indeed for the *form* of the developments, but for their truth, which is the real and only "difficulty." The "theory of development" is interesting as a theory, but of no force in an argument: the hypothesis of infallibility, if conceded, settles the question, and that whether "ideas" and "doctrines" are or are not capable of expansion.

the Church by the light of Scripture and reason—seen by which not a few of the so-called developments of Apostolic doctrine and Evangelic fact will appear but morbid outgrowths, the fungus and lichen, which threaten to strangle the plant which they deform.

Happily for the fortunes of the Church, happily, I may say, for the existence of the Christian faith, our religion has not been abandoned by its Founder to the workings of a blind self-evolution. Another, and that a corrective principle has at certain epochs of its history put forth its power, to arrest the march of what may have seemed development, but was rather dissolution incipient or progressive. The Church has brought forth from her treasure old facts in place of new fictions, old practices to supplant new superstitions, old truths to combat new theories. Among these critical and yet organic periods in the history of Christianity, the first half of the sixteenth century is of all the most memorable; nor shall we, who are this day met to do honour to the founders of a Society, the existence of which is due to the Reformation, refuse to recognise in the theological leaders in that mighty change, the characteristics of “scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.” Bringing to the study of the old letter the new-born spirit of free yet reverent enquiry, and the newly-kindled light of a sounder and wider learning, aided, too, by these purer moral instincts which had been evoked in nobler natures by the loud-crying corruptions of the time, these men of understanding hearts were enabled to read in the Apostolic writings more than had met the eye of Father or of Schoolman, and to interpret their meaning with a fulness and clearness as yet unprecedented in the history of the post-apostolic church. Their reverence for the

old was no blind antiquarian instinct, which appraises the value of records or institutions by a standard chronological rather than rational; which counts authorities instead of weighing them, and seeks to compensate the want of faith and insight by a credulity exigent of assent, yet restless and dissatisfied, and ever craving fresh pabulum to stay the pangs of its morbid hunger. Those who are possessed by this spirit of unreasoning admiration of the old, are found most open to the allurements of superstitious novelty; and by a righteous Nemesis, too often end in disguising, both from themselves and their disciples, the true lineaments of the very antiquity which they idolize: like the Scribes and Pharisees whom our Lord indignantly rebuked, because, while they took tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, they omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.

It was in a spirit far other than this, that the founders of the Protestant Church approached the early records of Christianity. It was because they had weighed and found wanting the traditions of medieval belief, and the deductions of medieval logic, that they had sought to invigorate their faculties by the study of a philosophy at once more comprehensive and more practical, of a humanity untrammelled by feudalism, and of languages which were the echo of simple yet clear and vigorous conceptions. What wonder if to a vision thus purged, the Apostolic writings shone forth radiant with meaning and instruction? For not only was the understanding of these men enlarged by frequent converse with the master-thinkers of Classical Antiquity, not only had a sounder knowledge of the ancient languages placed in their grasp the instrument of a faithful interpretation,



or the habit of seeking the true meaning of the authors they studied, rendered them intolerant of interpretations merely traditional. Such accomplishments might have made them sound critics of the letter, but could not have enabled them, first to penetrate and appropriate the spirit of the sacred writings, and then to diffuse it far and wide, until the general mind of Christendom was leavened by its influence.

The heart of these "scribes" had been "schooled unto the kingdom of heaven" by a discipline yet more severe than that by which their faculties had been trained and enlarged. The sale of indulgences, that monstrous practical *reductio ad absurdum* of the doctrine of merit, had wounded, and by wounding awakened the moral sensibility of all in whom the "spark divine" of conscience "remained unquenched." To all such it was evident, that peace with God was not to be purchased with silver and gold, and those who could reflect found the enquiry forced upon them, by what still costlier sacrifices, whether of penance or good works, the much-desired reconciliation could be effected. To each successive proposal the now awakened conscience returned an impatient negative. No nostrums, sacerdotal or scholastic, could medicine it to that sleep it had but yesterday: no merits of deified mortals; no formula, however impressive, of priestly absolution; no torments of the body, nor pangs, yet bitterer, of the remorseful soul.

In this, the hour of its sorest need, the spirit of man extracted courage from despair, and putting aside the traditions of centuries, dared to ascend to the primeval sources of Christian life and light. In the words of Paul of Tarsus was found the charm which had been vainly sought amidst the laboured subtleties of the

sainted doctor of Aquinum; and the great Christian paradox, that "man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law," was welcomed with a cry of joyful surprise, as a truth which had been hidden for generations from the consciousness of the Church.

I might pursue this subject farther than either the time, or the occasion which brings us together requires or warrants. I might shew how not the original doctrines only, but the most primitive formulas, symbolical and sacramental, were invested with a power and significance which to the men of that day were wholly new and strange. But enough has been said to illustrate the position, that in this, the greatest and truest reformation of the Church; the working of two elements, the enlightened critical understanding, and the primeval record, may be separately traced: that neither could, humanly speaking, have sufficed alone to produce the result, and that both must have failed, but for that preparation of the heart which was not the less from God, because it came through the medium of an intelligible historical causation.

The endeavour to read the future history of the Church by the light of the past, must ever be attended with difficulty and uncertainty. But if the time should arrive, when the doubts that shake, and the controversies that distract, the religious mind of our age and nation, shall be brought to a solution as satisfying to the earnest thinkers of the nineteenth, as was that which filled with peace the hearts of learned and unlearned in the sixteenth century, it is hardly too much to predict, that the end will have been attained by means analogous at any rate to those which we have seen in operation during the earlier epoch. We, at least, are in posses-

sion of an intellectual armoury, furnished with weapons not less keen than those which Reuchlin and Erasmus and Melanchthon wielded so skilfully and well. It is one among the many benefits for which we are indebted to the foresight of our founders, that while they appear not greatly to have disturbed the cycle of traditional studies, they took order that new seed should be planted among the old growths, in the hope that it would strike vigorous root in the yet virgin soil. The most perfect of human languages and literatures was represented from the first in this society by names which are still cherished and had in honour by all who hold that the study of classical Philology is at once an effectual discipline of the youthful faculties, and a worthy employment of the matured intellect. And that this creed has never among us become wholly extinct, we have proof in the not unfrequent occurrence in our *Fasti*, of names to which those of Cheke and Ascham must yield place: names of men the founders of new epochs in philological science, and whose claims as originators are recognised most cheerfully by those who in other lands have employed their methods with most surprising success. No foreign votary of mathematical science has expressed his veneration for the immortal name of Newton in terms more emphatic than those in which the great re-creator of Roman antiquity has acknowledged the claim of Bentley to be considered the true father of modern Philology. And in that more limited province of grammatical criticism in which Porson exercised his unrivalled sagacity,—shaping his conclusions to a precision not unworthy of an exact science—the soundest and acutest of foreign scholars have been ever the foremost

in their appreciation of his judgments, and those of him who followed Porson with scarce unequal steps\*.

That the most eminent successors of these great men in their respective provinces are to be sought among the learned of a kindred nation, may indeed be our fault, as it does undoubtedly seem to be our misfortune. Yet, when I think on the generous recognition which, upon the whole, we have accorded to the master-works of modern German erudition, and yet more when I look † on the enduring historical structures which have been reared and are rearing out of German materials, selected and combined by English genius and judgment, I think we may well be pardoned if, in spite of our own shortcomings, we refuse to despair of the future progress of Philology in the English universities. Of this at least I am sure, that it is well for our knowledge of antiquity, that its study has been prosecuted upon German ground and under German influences. At whatever rate those among us who may have attempted to follow the course of recent German speculation, may be disposed to value its positive results, we can hardly deny that on what may be called the subjective sciences, or those which contemplate man and the operations of man's spirit, the so-called higher philosophy has exercised a powerful and in the main a most beneficial influence. The specula-

\* Professor P. P. Dobree. See the elegant inscription on his monument in the Chapel of Trinity College.

† It is enough to mention the names of Thirlwall, Arnold, Grote, Muir, and C. Merivale. The language used in the text is not intended to imply the absence of originality of a very high order in the works alluded to: nor, on the other hand, is it meant to insinuate that the German "materials" are mere formless matter, which would be equally far from the truth.

tions of the unaided Grecian mind on the great problems of man's nature, his duties and his destiny, have enchained the interest and attention of modern thinkers of no inconsiderable originality. Many a dark corner of these ancient structures has been illuminated, many false views of their proportions rectified; and our point of standing has been so adjusted, that we are now at length in a condition to behold them in right proportion, and with a truly critical eye. And this, because they have been explored by men who have combined philological exactness with philosophic insight; men who have felt the work to be a labour of love, sympathising heartily with every effort of humanity to read its own riddles; and to whom their own exertions in parallel lines of thought have afforded the illustrations both of similitude and of contrast. These causes have combined to render the history of ancient Philosophy, as it is now treated in Germany, one of the most interesting and successful of the applications of Philology: and if we compare the state of this study now, with the appearance it presented a century ago, we shall not be loth to acknowledge how much Philology has gained by her sojourn in a land of philosophers.

I will mention one other not inconsiderable fruit of this alliance between independent sciences. A light has been thrown upon the history of the religious mind of Antiquity, not less powerful than that which has illustrated its Philosophy. Mythology, from being a source of questionable entertainment for the young, or of unprofitable employment to erudite dreamers, has become a field of fruitful investigation for genial yet sober and cultivated intellects. A chaos it may still be termed, but it is one in which the instructed eye can discern

the germs of the highest developments; inclosing in its womb the living seeds of those luxuriant growths of art, philosophy, and even civil and social wisdom, which shaded the soil of Hellas in the period of the adolescence and maturity of the nation.

Besides the intrinsic interest which those two applications of Philology must possess for those who are endued with that true historical feeling from which nothing that is human is alien, I conceive that they also well deserve a place among the "new things" to be stored in the treasure-house of the "scribe" who would be "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." The Protestant Church has in late years been menaced from two opposed quarters. On the one hand by the theorists of development, on the other by the advocates of the so-called mythical interpretation; the former bidding us accept the sophistry of the schools, the legends\* of the cloister, and the superstitions of the semi-pagan—vulgar,—the "idols of the theatre, the cavern, and the tribe"—with an acquiescence as cheerful as that which we accord to the Gospel narrative: while the others see, for their part, nothing objectionable in this identification, provided we will consent to trace in all alike the threads of one great web of mythicising symbolism.

The point of meeting between these seemingly opposite extremes it is not difficult to detect; and indeed the youth of this generation are told by infidel and Romanist alike, that the time is come when they must elect between Romanism and unbelief, between the acceptance of exploded superstition and the rejection of positive religion. To the temptations proffered by

\* No one who is acquainted with the more recent "developments" of Dr Newman's opinions, can consider this an overcharged statement.

these two subtle beasts of the field the native sense of the people of England has hitherto opposed, on the whole, a faithful resistance; but if those who are called on by position and by natural endowments to give a reason to themselves and others of the faith that is in them, would meet fairly, and vanquish on their own ground these theorists who dispute the empire of the heart and reason of the present generation, it seems to me nothing short of self-evident, that they must apply themselves to the task after mature study not only of the history of philosophical speculation, but of that of the religious sentiment, in those phases especially of its existence in which it seems spontaneously to clothe itself in the forms of history. Let us not, in a spirit of national prejudice or national conceit, refuse to avail ourselves of the aids which our continental kinsmen offer us for this purpose. Rather let the countrymen of Bentley welcome back among them the science of which, by the willing testimony of Germans themselves, he was the intellectual father. She returns not empty-handed, but bearing an ample quiver, stored with shafts potent as of old to quell the banded forces of sophistry and superstition.

In this most imperfect attempt to recommend to the students of classical literature the claims upon their attention of some of the later applications of Philology, and to point out the bearing of new speculations upon old and ever-recurring questions, it is impossible for me to judge how far I may have succeeded in carrying with me the convictions of my hearers. But I shall not have spoken in vain, if I shall have conveyed or confirmed a persuasion of the intrinsic dignity and

value of these pursuits, to which so large a proportion of our earnest students dedicate their best powers in this ancient seat of learning. While pointing out to them the capabilities of Philology, as an instrument of progressive knowledge, and a key to some of the subtler operations of the active spirit of man, I would not be understood to disparage the more permanent and fundamental portions of the science, with which they are most familiar. Let them never be ashamed of the pains bestowed in the acquisition of that nice accuracy, which refuses to accept like conceptions as identical, or to estimate the importance of a distinction by its breadth. It is in the nature of error to "widen upwards," and many a baneful confusion of thought has had its root in a confusion of language. And in the absence of any formal provision for teaching the science of Logic, it is the more necessary to insist on the rigorous study of Grammar, which is its counterpart,—as speech is the counterfeit of \*thought,—and which alone has a fair claim † to be regarded as its equivalent,

\* Which Plato happily names, τὴν ἔσω ψυχῆς διάλεκτον. It is obvious that if there are laws regulating this faculty of inner discourse, they must find their analoga in the laws of language. But these laws constitute Grammar. Perhaps some apology is necessary for repeating this sometimes forgotten theoretical truism. Practically, I am convinced that there is no better "propædeutic" for the study of the laws of thought, than the rational investigation of the subtleties of Greek construction and usage.

† The only department of Logic for which *Geometry* can be supposed a substitute is Syllogism. For of its definitions it allows no discussion, or at least hands over the discussion to others (παραδίδωσι τῆ διαλεκτικῆ, says Plato) and even of Syllogism it is only so far a substitute, as the practice of an art is a substitute for the science on which it depends: *e. g.* as the practice of Gymnastics for the science of Anatomy. The disciplinary and educational uses of the higher Mathematics have been pointed out with much subtlety of discrimination by



or substitute, in the cycle of strictly disciplinary studies. May the time never arrive, when we of this college shall refuse to echo the prayer of the loftiest poet and most observant and withal least scholastic thinker of modern Germany\*; that the study of the languages of Greece and Rome may continue, while civilization lasts, to be regarded as the basis of all liberal culture.

At so critical a period as the present in the history of the University, I should hardly be deemed to have fulfilled the task which has devolved upon me this day, were I to conclude without any allusion to that impending change in our academical constitution, which employs the thoughts of all; filling some with hope, some with fear, and the majority, probably, with a feeling mixed of both. Far from us be that narrowness of heart or dulness of brain, which should confine our

Mr R. L. Ellis, late Fellow of Trinity, in his admirable evidence sent to the Cambridge Commission. I cannot but regret that the very eminent members of that board should have thought it unnecessary to provide us with a Logical Chair, at a time especially when so much interest has been excited for the *scientia scientiarum* by the work of Mr Mill, by Dr Whewell's *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences*, and by some admirable treatises which have appeared recently in the sister University. The fellowship examination at Trinity is, so far as I know, the only Cambridge examination, in which any knowledge of logic is required or encouraged. The Professor of Moral Philosophy occasionally introduces questions on intellectual philosophy and its history in the papers he proposes to the candidates for honours in the Moral Sciences Tripos. Cambridge education undoubtedly gains by this liberal interpretation of the term Moral Philosophy; but it is scarcely creditable to the University that such portions of knowledge should be admitted into its course by a side door only.

\* See the collection of Maxims, &c. in the IXth Volume of Goethe's *Nachgelassene Werke*, 1833, p. 123. Compare p. 111. I have observed the same sentiment in other parts of his works, but am unable to verify my recollections.

sympathies to the fortunes of our own house, however justly endeared to us by benefits temporal and spiritual. The College which nurtured Bacon cannot look without interest at the first systematic attempt that has yet been made to realize Bacon's idea of a University. And ill would it become us, while not unreasonably upholding against modern sciolism the intellectual value of accurate erudition and exact mathematical discipline, to ignore, in a spirit of pedantic jealousy, the existence and the progress of sciences which tend more immediately to the benefit of the commonwealth, or to the comfort of man's life, by the subjugation of nature to his uses. Very different were the sentiments harboured by those great men whose memory is our best palladium and chief tower of strength against our enemies. It is well known with what warm sympathy Bentley watched the triumphs of the Newtonian philosophy, and how zealously he laboured to further studies remote from his own. And the eloquent preacher and profound theologian and scholar who worthily filled the mathematical chair afterwards occupied by Newton, in that noble Latin oration\* in which he commends to his hearers in the public mathematical school the merits of the then new philosophy, though he does not neglect to advert to the educational uses of which it is susceptible, yet insists with far more earnestness on the intrinsic beauty of its methods, and the variety and magnificence of its outward results. After recounting some of the achievements of this philosophy, and the names of Galileo, Gilbert, Descartes and others, who, as he tells us, had

\* To be found in the IVth Volume of the old folio edition of Barrow's works.

extended the pomeria of natural science far beyond their ancient limits. "Turn," he exclaims, "an attentive eye on those sciences, clothed as we now behold them in the purple of nobility, seated on the thrones of kings, magnified in the opinion, explored by the studious zeal, celebrated by the eulogies of almost every man of gentle parentage, who in these days affects the reputation of wit, or seriously devotes himself to philosophy. That such men should rival you in any department of liberal learning. is unbecoming, that they should excel you, were foul shame. Especially as you can in no other way realize the name or uphold the honour of an University, which you profess yourselves to be, unless you make good your claim to no vulgar skill in every kind of knowledge worthy the attention of a cultivated intellect." "*Præsertim cum Universitatis, quod profitemini, nomen adimplere, decus sustentare, non aliâ ratione valeatis, quam si omnigenæ scientiæ liberali ingenio dignæ, non vulgarem vobis peritiam vindicetis.*"

To these weighty words of Barrow it would be presumption were I to add comment or application of my own. With them I would gladly conclude, but I have still a pious though a painful duty to perform.

It rarely happens, on these occasions, that the preacher and his audience are so favoured, as to be able to look back on the history of the society during the year gone by, without a sigh for some one of their number whom God has called away from this state of mortal existence. The present is unhappily not one of the years marked out for exception. We have to lament the most premature removal of one\* whom many of us

\* James Armitage, Esq., M.A. who was elected Fellow of Trinity in October 1845, and who died, after five years of suffering, in the course of last summer.

well knew, and all who knew well, loved and valued. He was a man of a nature gentle yet earnest, sincere but conciliating, even in temper though decided in character and tenacious of purpose. An ardent lover of science for its own sake, and of attainments which, used as he could use them, might have won for him a name among successful enquirers into nature and her laws, he preferred to dedicate his powers to a task humbler in the estimation of men, but haply not of less account in the divine appraisal. Shortly after his election to a fellowship in this society, he was called to discharge a laborious and very responsible office at the central Board of Education; and it was the zeal with which he discharged duties which would have been irksome to one less earnestly bent on diffusing the blessings of education among hitherto most neglected classes, that laid the foundation of that disease which was destined to carry him to the tomb, though, alas! not till after years of pain and endurance. His sufferings under a malady too evidently hopeless, were aggravated by what to the imagination seems a doom worse than death, the total privation of sight. But even under this calamity his heart sank not, nor was his exemplary and unvarying patience spent; and those who witnessed his Christian demeanour as his life drew near its close, doubt not, but earnestly and humbly believe, that the blessing pronounced upon the pure in heart has been fulfilled to him, and that death, which terminated his life of darkness, has opened to him the door into an eternal day.

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